



# IOWA LIBRARY SERVICES REORGANIZATION REPORT

SUBMITTED BY:

IOWA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
DALE VANDE HAAR, PRESIDENT

SUBMITTED ON NOVEMBER 1, 2010 AS DIRECTED IN SF 2376

# STREAMLINING THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO IOWA LIBRARIES

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During its 2010 session, the Iowa Legislature directed the library community to work collaboratively over the interim to develop a plan to streamline state-funded library operations and services ([SF 2376](#)).

The Iowa Library Association stepped up to this challenge and appointed an 11-member Library Reorganization Committee, with representatives of Library Service Areas, the State Library, and public libraries of all sizes and from all areas of the state.

During the Committee's five-month process, the committee held three public meetings during which audience participation was actively encouraged. Minutes and all meeting materials were promptly posted on the ILA website and noticed on the ILA list serves. To engage the broader library community, the Library Reorganization Committee participated in six town hall meetings around the state, conducted two surveys, and created a blog to encourage further discussion. Feedback was incorporated into this final report.

The following report recommends that **a new, streamlined model of state-funded library operations and services in Iowa** be enacted and funded by the General Assembly. The proposed new model includes the following elements:

- Locally delivered, hands-on support services for Iowa libraries are preserved with **seven district offices**. Essential support services identified by the Iowa library community will be preserved and enhanced.
- Library Service Areas and State Library will become **a single agency called Iowa Library Services**, unifying the mission of service to Iowans and all Iowa libraries.
- All employees of the new agency will be **state employees**. The total number of employees is reduced by 8% (3.375 FTEs).
- A **9-member Iowa Commission on Libraries** appointed by the Governor will govern the agency and a new **statewide Advisory Panel** will ensure broad input from the library community to the newly expanded Commission.
- The new model will be **funded with both state and federal dollars**. Since state funding is required to match federal money, the new model will make it easier for Iowa Library Services to meet its federal matching and maintenance of effort requirements, and will prevent a loss of federal funds due to state budget cuts.

The Library Reorganization Committee, Iowa Library Association Board, Iowa Commission on Libraries, and the members of the Iowa Library Association all voted to support the following report and its recommendations. When polled, 88% of the Iowa Library Association members voted to support the plan.

You can view all materials from the ILA Library Reorganization Committee's work and the full report online: [www.iowalibraryassociation.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=100](http://www.iowalibraryassociation.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=100).

**BACKGROUND.** The Iowa Library Association Reorganization Committee respectfully submits the following report to the Iowa General Assembly, in compliance with the provisions of Senate File 2376.

The 2010 General Assembly adopted House Amendment 8516 to Senate File 2376, which includes the following requirement:

“The library services areas and the state library shall work collaboratively to conduct a study of ways to streamline state-funded library operations and services. The study shall, at a minimum, address the following:

- (1) Library service area service delivery strengths
- (2) Best practices for delivering continuing education
- (3) The use of social networking tools to provide consulting services
- (4) Consolidation of bookkeeping and auditing functions
- (5) Locally based creative collaborations among all types of libraries.

The library service areas shall collaboratively submit their findings and recommendations in a report to the general assembly on or before November 1, 2010.”

At two meetings held in February-March 2010 to discuss library services reorganization issues, Dale Vande Haar, the Iowa Library Association (ILA) president, proposed that ILA facilitate a study of streamlining library services. Legislators, legislative staff, Library Service Area (LSA) staff, and State Library staff who were present all agreed that ILA would serve as facilitator, and H8516 was subsequently passed. ILA then formed a Reorganization Committee of eleven individuals representing the Library Service Areas, the State Library, and public libraries of all sizes and from all areas of the state. This report is the work of the ILA Reorganization Committee.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.** *The committee’s recommendation is that a new, streamlined model of state-funded library operations and services in Iowa be enacted and funded by the General Assembly.*

The proposed **new model** includes the following elements:

1. The new model **preserves locally delivered, hands-on support services for Iowa libraries.** There will be **7 district offices throughout the state, with a district librarian consultant and project coordinator in each office**, providing direct, hands-on services to local libraries. The district offices will be located when possible in local libraries and will be in the same areas of the state as the current LSA offices. Library support services will continue to be responsive, flexible, and tailored to the needs of the individual libraries.
2. Reorganization of the Library Service Areas and the State Library into a **single agency called Iowa Library Services** unifies the mission of service to Iowans and to all Iowa libraries. The agency, which will continue to be located in the Department of Education, will be responsible for providing high-quality library support and information services that are consistently available to all libraries across the state, regardless of location or size. Iowa Library Services will have two units – Library Support Network and Specialized Library Services – and employees will work in teams. Creation of the new agency joins the best of the Library Service Areas with the best of the State Library, while streamlining administrative

functions and eliminating any perception of service duplication or inconsistency of service delivery across the state.

3. All employees of the new agency will be **state employees**; LSA experience will be a priority in hiring district consultants and district project coordinators.

4. The agency will be **governed by a 9-member board, the Commission of Libraries**. This board will include librarians and non-librarians; members will be appointed by the Governor. This recommendation adds two new commissioners to ensure all areas of the state are represented.

5. A **new, single, statewide Advisory Panel** will be composed of librarians representing all geographical areas, library types, and library sizes, to provide broad input from the library community to the newly expanded Commission of Libraries. The Panel, which replaces the current regional board structure, will provide guidance about the needs of Iowa libraries to the Commission of Libraries and to the administration and staff of the new Iowa Library Services Agency as well as serve as a forum for best practice sharing.

6. **Essential support services identified by the Iowa library community** in response to a survey issued in early summer 2010 **will be preserved and enhanced**. Locally based creative collaborations among all types of libraries will continue to be encouraged and facilitated, including WILBOR and NEIBORS (downloadable books services). The Reorganization Committee recognizes the importance of current regional projects to the libraries involved in them, and support will be provided for as many current projects as possible. The amount of support that will be available depends on the level of funding appropriated by the legislature.

7. The new model will be **funded with both state and federal dollars**. A new agency strategic plan and a new Library Services and Technology Act plan for the use of federal funding will be developed with input from Iowa libraries, soon after the reorganization takes effect. Since state funding is required to match federal money, the new model will make it easier for Iowa Library Services to meet its federal matching and maintenance of effort requirements, and will prevent a loss of federal funds due to state budget cuts.

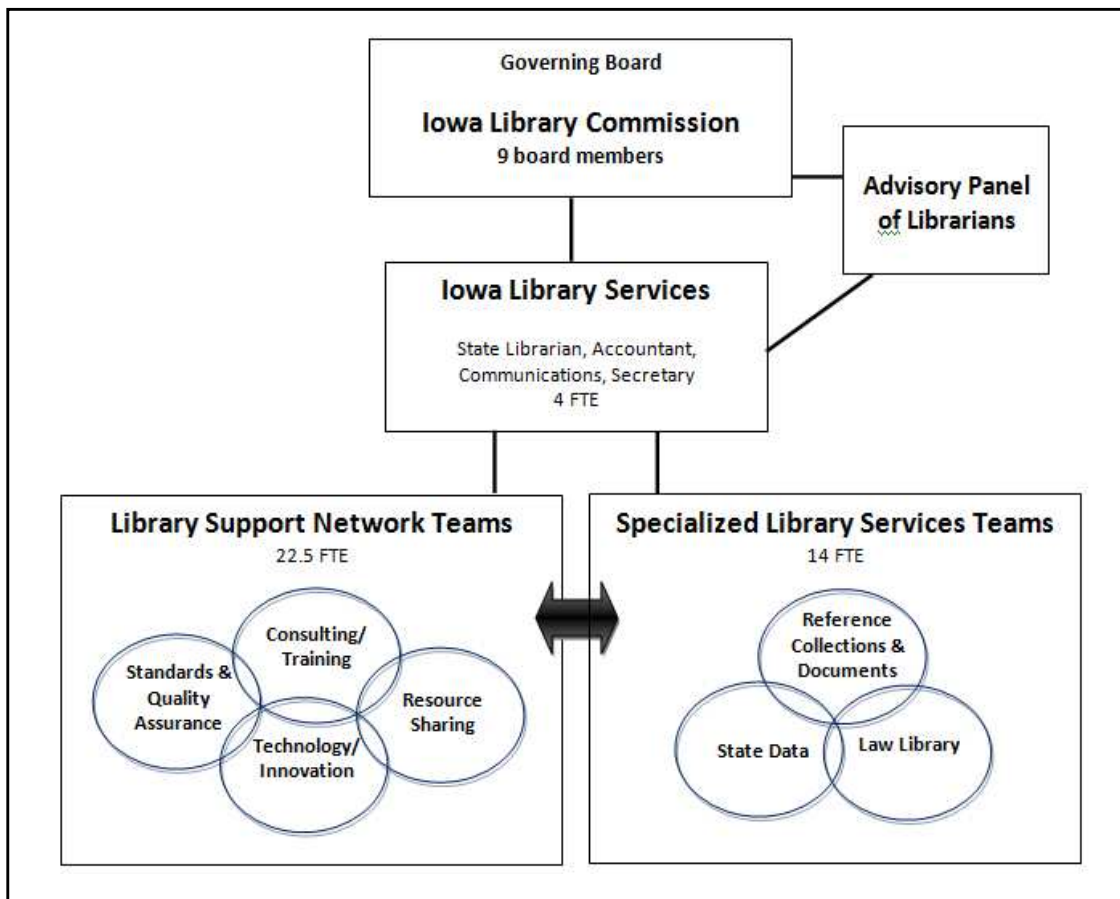
8. The new model will employ **40.5 FTEs** – an 8 percent reduction in the current combined total of State Library and Library Service Area employees. This represents a total reduction of 3.375 staff.

In the development of the model, the ILA Reorganization Committee carefully considered the following factors:

- The need strongly expressed by the Iowa library community for the continuation of locally delivered, hands-on support services for Iowa libraries, through at least 7 district offices located throughout the state
- The need strongly expressed by the Iowa library community for the preservation and enhancement of locally based creative collaborations among all types of libraries
- The need for library support services which are consistently available to all libraries across the state, regardless of location or size of the library

- The need for efficiencies and economy, as well as effectiveness, in the provision of state-funded services
- The need for elimination of administrative duplication
- The need for accountability/transparency of state funds

An illustration of the proposed model follows:



## COMMITTEE PROCESS and INVOLVEMENT OF THE IOWA LIBRARY COMMUNITY.

During the summer of 2010, the ILA Reorganization Committee held three public meetings while conducting its study on streamlining. The meetings were open, widely publicized, and attended by many members of the Iowa library community. Meeting attendees as well as committee members were asked to provide input at each meeting. Minutes of the meetings and other information about the committee's work were promptly published on the Iowa Library Association Web site ([www.iowalibraryassociation.org](http://www.iowalibraryassociation.org)) and on the Iowa Library Services blog (<http://www.iowalibraryservices.blogspot.com/>).

The five specific issues that the study was required to address were discussed at the first meeting of the committee.

- **LSA service delivery strengths** were identified as hands-on, personalized consulting services as well as the provision of back-up reference and interlibrary loan services. ***The continued availability to Iowa libraries of individualized, locally delivered consulting services has been repeatedly identified by the entire Iowa library community as an essential need of the highest priority, as a service necessary for the survival of Iowa's small libraries, and as a core service that must be preserved.*** Continuation of locally delivered consulting services is a key element of the new model.
- **Best practices for delivering Continuing Education (CE)** include the development and delivery of online courses and tutorials, which save travel time and money and can be taken at the convenience of the learner. Another best practice identified was the provision of an in-person visit and an orientation to Iowa libraries for new public library directors. The new model assumes that online CE, as well as in-person CE, will continue to be made available to Iowa librarians. Also assumed is that new library directors will be visited by district consultants who will provide orientation for them.
- **Use of social networking tools to provide consulting services** is inexpensive, facilitates real-time communication and promotes collaboration. The new model encourages the continued and expanded use of social networking tools in the delivery of support services to Iowa librarians.
- **Consolidation of bookkeeping and auditing functions.** The new model consolidates bookkeeping and auditing functions by creating a single state agency, subject to state bookkeeping and auditing practices. This will provide the state with greater fiscal oversight, transparency and accountability.
- **Locally based creative collaborations among all types of libraries** were identified as an important part of the Iowa library community that must be continued and enhanced. ***Like local delivery of personalized consulting services, the encouragement of creative local library collaborations has been identified by all segments of the Iowa library community as essential to the continued delivery of high quality services to Iowans.*** Concern has been expressed that library services will become inflexible and "one-size-fits-all". The new model of service delivery must place a high priority on encouraging creative and flexible collaboration.

Two statewide online surveys were conducted by the committee as part of the study on streamlining. The results of both were made available to the public and library community immediately through the ILA Web site and listserv.



The first survey was designed to determine which library support services are most important, and to identify key characteristics of support services. Respondents were also asked what they wanted to see more of, and less of, in the new library support service plan. 684 members of the Iowa library community responded by ranking the most important support services, and more than 350 responded to the open-ended questions. Survey results were used by the committee in the development of the new service model. The most highly-ranked support services are:

- Education/training for director and staff
- In-state interlibrary loan
- Reciprocal borrowing in-state and Open Access reimbursement
- Compilation of library statistics
- Interlibrary loan reimbursement
- Purchasing consortia for database licensing
- Direct state aid for public libraries
- Pursuit of state and national grants for libraries
- Public library standards and accreditation
- Summer reading program support
- Consulting and field consulting teams
- Purchasing consortia for downloadable audiobooks.

Complete study results, including comments, are available here:

[http://www.iowalibraryassociation.org/associations/2221/files/SurveySummary\\_Libraries\\_June2010%20.pdf](http://www.iowalibraryassociation.org/associations/2221/files/SurveySummary_Libraries_June2010%20.pdf)

Additional information about the ranking of most important support services is available here:

[http://www.iowalibraryassociation.org/associations/2221/files/SurveySummary07\\_15\\_2010.pdf](http://www.iowalibraryassociation.org/associations/2221/files/SurveySummary07_15_2010.pdf)

Between the committee's second and third meetings, a small group of committee members met to further develop the new model. The small group used designs submitted by committee subgroups at the July 7, 2010 meeting as the basis for their work, along with the responses to the survey of the Iowa library community. They looked at the current structure of the State Library and the LSAs, and worked to give the new design a flat yet flexible organizational structure. They agreed from the start that the new model would include service delivery around the state.

The new model was presented to, and approved unanimously by, the full ILA Reorganization Committee at its August 18 meeting. At this meeting, observers in the audience were also allowed to vote on support of the new structure, with nearly unanimous support.

Information about the proposed plan was shared through the ILA Web site, the Iowa Library Services blog, on statewide library online lists, and at six Town Meeting continuing education events held around the state in September.

The second online survey was widely distributed in early October to solicit input about the plan. Respondents had three options in voting: (1) I support the plan; (2) I generally support the plan, but please consider the concerns I have (respondents were asked to explain their concerns); and (3) I do not support the plan. There were **427 validated responses**, with 359 respondents representing public libraries, 38 representing academic libraries, 15 representing school libraries, and 22 representing special libraries. 80.9% of the public library respondents represented small or rural public libraries serving a population under 10,000.

- **60.4% said they support the plan as it is.**
- **27.4% replied that they generally support the plan, but have concerns that they listed.**  
The reorganization committee plans to continue to adapt its implementation plan to address these concerns, most of which reflect a desire to see an orderly transition without service disruption.
- **12.2% replied that they do not support the plan.**

Detailed results of the survey, including comments, are available here:

<http://www.iowalibraryassociation.org/associations/2221/files/SummaryofLibraryServicesReorganizationPlanSurvey.pdf>

On August 18, ILA Reorganization Committee members voted unanimously to support the new model. On October 11, the Iowa Library Association Executive Board voted to support the work of the Reorganization Committee and the plan. On October 14, at its annual business meeting, the membership of the Iowa Library Association overwhelmingly voted to adopt a 2011 legislative agenda which asks the General Assembly to enact the proposed model and to provide enough funding to fully implement it. On October 22, the Commission of Libraries (the governor-appointed governing board of the State Library) unanimously voted to endorse the plan.

**SERVICES FOR IOWA LIBRARIES.** ILA Reorganization Committee members are united in their commitment to ensuring the best possible services for Iowa libraries, and worked hard to develop a fiscally responsible organization model which is responsive to the diverse needs of Iowa libraries. **Votes taken by the Iowa library community, noted in the paragraph above, indicate that the community supports the model.**

**It is important to note that adequate funding to fully implement the new model is essential.** Iowans' use of public libraries continues to increase every year, and more than two-thirds of all Iowans have an active public library card. Iowans made nearly 19 million visits to their public libraries last year; more than 51,000 Iowans visit a public library every single day. The current economic crisis has made libraries busier than ever, with a recent study finding that 40 percent of public library computer users access the Internet for employment uses, such as job searching and online applications. **Iowa's busy public libraries need and deserve high-quality, readily available state-funded support services, to assist them in providing excellent services to Iowans. The ILA Reorganization Committee believes that adoption of the proposed model will serve the Iowa library community well.**

Respectfully submitted by the Iowa Library Association Reorganization Committee:

**Lorraine Borowski**, Decorah Public Library

**Nathan Clark**, Ruthven and Emmetsburg Public Libraries

**Ann Coulter**, LSA Trustee and Director, Learning Resource Ctr, Southwestern Comm. Coll., Creston

**Monica Gohlinghorst**, chairperson, Commission of Libraries and trustee, Council Bluffs Public Library

**Susan Kling**, Marion Public Library

**Sandy Long**, Whittemore Public Library

**Bonnie McKewon**, Northwest Library Services (the Library Service Area serving northwest Iowa)

**LaWanda Roudebush**, Davenport Public Library

**Nancy Trask**, Winterset Public Library

**Dale Vande Haar**, President, Iowa Library Association

**Mary Wegner**, State Library